LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (LECP) ONLINE AGLEARN TRAINING

L eadership is often described as a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common goal. In order for a leader to have social influence the leader must be able to affect the emotions, opinions, or behaviors of others which requires skill and knowledge. Effective leadership is a constant personal challenge requiring a key set of competencies and the ability to build productive relationships and coalitions.

> "The only things worth learning are the things you learn after you know it all."
>
> Harry S. Truman

T **he Leadership Essentials Certificate Program (LECP)** is designed for those who are currently in roles that require advanced leadership skills. The program is not a replacement for any Agency leadership programs and is not intended to be used in place of Agency programs. The LECP provides a blended learning experience and uses a combination of on-line AgLearn courses, Books 24x7, mentoring, and other experiences to enhance understanding of leadership competencies and broaden knowledge. The Virtual University will be tracking your progress in AgLearn, manage the program webinars, and issue the certificate of completion.

OBJECTIVES: The Leadership Essentials Certificate Program (LECP) has three main objectives:

- Enhanced understanding of essential leadership competencies
- Create cohorts of prepared leaders for organizational succession planning needs
- Develop a USDA community of trained leaders

INTENDED AUDIENCE: This course is for you if:

- You are in a leadership role, such as team lead, supervisor, or manager (GS 13, 14, or 15)
- You want to enhance and expand your leadership skills
- You are committed to your leadership development and to the program

DURATION: The following will be completed over an eight (8) month period and will culminate in a certificate of completion: Approximately 12-18 hours of online learning and reading, one (1-2 hour) Leadership Learning Event, reading two books, and mentoring. Additionally, recommended follow on learning will be provided.

COMPETENCIES: Participants will enhance understanding of these essential leadership competencies:

1. **Human Capital Management**-Builds and manages workforce based on organizational goals and staffing needs. Ensures that employees are appropriately recruited, selected,

appraised, and rewarded; takes action to address performance problems. Manages a multi-sector workforce and a variety of work situations.

2. **Leveraging Diversity**-Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.
3. **Developing Others**-Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.
4. **Financial Management**-Understands the organization's financial processes. These processes may include: preparation, justification, and administration the program budget to include procurement and contracting to achieve desired results.
5. **Team Building** - Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.
6. **Influencing/Negotiating** – Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.

PROGRAM COMPONTENTS: The Leadership Essentials Certificate Program has seven components (see component details on next pages):

1. Competency Self-Assessment (Optional)
2. AgLearn Registration (Join the USDA Connect Leadership Essentials Community)
3. Mentoring
4. Leadership Essentials On-Line Courses
5. One (optional) Leadership Learning Event
6. Evaluation
7. Awarding of Certificate of Completion

Be sure to discuss your interest in this program with your supervisor and ensure your supervisor supports your registration. Discuss the time commitment and balancing your development with your responsibilities and work priorities. Remember that your supervisor must grant time for you to participate in training during normal duty hours, and advanced supervisory approval is required to take training outside of the normal duty hours (as required by Title 5 and the Fair Labor Standards Act). Also, please note that the certificate of completion, awarded upon completion of this program, is not intended to prepare a registrant/student for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS DESCRIPTION: Following is a description and detailed information about the components in the Leadership Essentials Certificate Program:

Program Component 1 – (Optional) Competency Self-Assessment

Begin your training by completing the Competency Self-Assessment. This tool is based on the OPM leadership competencies, and provides an ongoing method for development by assessing your proficiency levels in various competencies and assists you in identifying areas to build your

knowledge and skills. The LECP Competency Self-Assessment is located at the following link:
http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vu/docs/lecp-competency-sa.pdf

Program Component 2 – Registration

Register by adding a goal to your IDP that includes enhancing the above competencies and list
this program as the activity. Log into AgLearn and assign this program to yourself. You can use
the search tool in AgLearn and search for "Leadership Essentials Certificate Program" and
assign the program to your to-do list. All of the courses in the Program will appear on your to-do
list and you can begin taking the courses sequentially. Also go to:
https://connections.usda.gov/communities/community/USDA_Leadership_Essentials_Certificate
_Program to join the USDA Connect, Leadership Essentials Community to begin networking
with other registrants in this program.

Program Component 3 – Obtain a Mentor

It is strongly suggested (yet not mandated) that you identify someone to serve as your mentor to
help you develop leadership skills. Select someone who is not in your chain of command who
can give you helpful feedback and guidance. Currently, APHIS, DM, FSA, NRCS, and RD are
regularly using the USDA Mentor Portal. You can access the Portal at:
http://www.eservices.usda.gov/usdamentoring/. Visit the 'Contact Us' page to find your Agency
Mentoring Administrator. Contact the administrator to determine if your agency uses the Portal
or another method to manage your agency's mentoring program. If your agency isn't listed, send
an email to roderick.mance@dm.usda.gov and he will locate your agency point of contact. If
your agency is using the Portal, your Agency Mentoring Administrator can provide guidance on
how to gain access to the Portal, complete an application, receive training and enter a mentoring
relationship.

Program Component 4 – On-line Curriculum

Beginning with the online courses, you will engage in a series of experiences that will explore
your strengths and increase your knowledge and skills in human capital management, leveraging
diversity, developing others, emotional intelligence, and other leadership skills.

The following AgLearn courses must be completed to receive credit for the program.

1. **Developing Others**-
    a. Developing Employees (HRCI/PHR) (1.5 hours)
    b. Developing Employees through Delegation (0.2 hours)
    c. Developing People (0.2 hours)
    d. Establishing the Conditions for a Learning Culture (1 hour)
    e. Evaluating and Sustaining Organizational Learning (1 hour)
    f. Management Essentials: Developing Your Direct Reports (1 hour)
2. **Financial Management**-
    a. Federal Budgeting Process (1 hour)

3. **Human Capital Management**-
   a. Federal HR Flexibilities (1 hour)
   b. Human Resources Flexibilities (1.5 hours)
   c. Leadership Essentials: Leading Business Execution (1 hour)
   d. Leadership Essentials: Building Your Influence as a Leader (1 hour)
4. **Influencing/Negotiating**-
   a. Building and Managing Upward Relationships (0.2 hours)
   b. Getting Results without Direct Authority: Influencing Your Boss (1 hour)
   c. Getting Results without Direct Authority: Persuasive Communication (1 hour)
5. **Leveraging Diversity**-
   a. Communicating Across Cultures (1 hour)
   b. Improving Communication in Cross-cultural Relationships (1 hour)
   c. Managing Diversity (0.2 hours)
   d. Understanding Workplace Diversity (0.1 hours)
6. **Team Building**-
   a. Developing Self Sufficient Teams (0.5 hours)
   b. Leadership Essentials: Communicating Vision (1 hour)
   c. Leadership Essentials: Leading with Emotional Intelligence (1 hour)
   d. Leading Teams: Developing the Team and its Culture (1 hour)
   e. Leading Teams: Managing Virtual Teams (1 hour)

Key Chapters in the following AgLearn Books 24x7 Library must be read and may be discussed during the webinars:
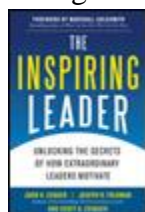
The Inspiring Leader: Unlocking the Secrets of How Extraordinary Leaders Motivate
by John H. Zenger, Joseph R. Folkman and Scott K. Edinger
McGraw-Hill © 2009 (268 pages) *Citation*
ISBN:9780071621243
Drawing from statistically significant data and objective empirical evidence, this book reveals the 16 key competencies that separate the top 10 percent of leaders from the rest and shows you how to put those strategies to work in your own business.

Chapters 1-6 of *The Inspiring Leader: Unlocking the Secrets of How Extraordinary Leaders Motivate*

---AND---

Lead by Example: 50 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Results
by John Baldoni
AMACOM © 2009 (240 pages) Citation
ISBN:9780814412947
Filled with examples of visionary leaders who have overcome their shortcomings and achieved greatness, this practical guide will show readers how to build trust, drive results, and win the respect of the people they lead.

Part I and II: Lessons 1 - 26 of *Lead by Example: 50 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Results*

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Program Component 5 – Leadership Learning Events

All those registered for this program in AgLearn, will receive an invitation and registration link for Leadership Learning Events. Attendance at all events will be optional but participation in a minimum of one (1) event of your choice is required. The events will be available via webinar for those in the field. These events are appended to the curriculum and will be updated periodically throughout the year. Participants can also stay informed of events via the USDA Connect community associated with this program. Examples of topics covered in these types of events are: Managing Change during Difficult Times, The Stock and Hatch Acts, Writing ECQs, Leveraging Diversity, Coaching and Mentoring.

Program Component 6 - Evaluation

After you have completed all courses, please complete the Leadership Essentials Certificate Program Evaluation. This evaluation is designed to measure your satisfaction as well as provide information so that we continually improve this course. Curriculum completions will be checked once per week and the evaluation will be added to your AgLearn To-Do List. This finalizes the curriculum and all courses and the evaluation should have moved to you Completed Work list. After completing and submitting the evaluation, participants can print a certificate by accessing the evaluation item in their Completed Work list.

Program Component 7 – Awarding of Certificate

Upon completion of the evaluation, you will be awarded a certificate for the completion of the Leadership Essentials Certificate Program.

GETTING STARTED

To register for the program, go to AgLearn and find Leadership Essentials Certificate Program as described below. Please add goals to your IDP then reflect an enhancement of the competencies outlined above.

How to Register:
1. Log into AgLearn: http//www.aglearn.usda.gov
2. Click on the **Catalog** tab,
3. Select a **Simple Catalog Search**,
4. Enter in the **Keyword Line** "Leadership Essentials Certificate Program."
5. Click on **Search Button**
6. When the course name appears:
7. Click on **Self Assign Curriculum**
8. The curriculum contains all of the courses. Each course will appear in your "To-Do List"
9. After completing each course, be sure to take the survey to obtain credit for the course.
10. When you submit the survey, you may have to select the Home tab on the top of the page to return to your courses. You will need to go into your "To-Do List" to take the next course.

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (LECP) ONLINE AGLEARN TRAINING

Need Help? Please visit the AgLearn Job Aids web page for trouble shooting and getting started tips, or ask a Virtual University team member at virtualuniversity@dm.usda.gov.

AgLearn Job Aids
- Getting Started in AgLearn : https://aglearn.usda.gov/customcontent/AgLearn/AgLearn-GettingStartedGuide/GettingStartedGuide.pdf
- Access Books 24 x 7 via the "Easy Links" section on your AgLearn home page.

EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Training doesn't always have to be a formal course. Explore options from following list for additional ways to stretch and develop competencies through experiences.

- **Work groups** - serve on a special work group to use your current skills in a new environment.

- **Teams/Projects** - request to join a special team, project or assignment.

- **Focus or sensing groups** - these are a group of people who discuss their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a service, concept, or idea. An example of this is the chiefs sensing group: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/chief/sensing.

- **Cross-Training** - acquire knowledge and skills from coworkers, who have similar grade levels and experiences. A new skill can make you more valuable.

- **Details** - check the USDA Detail Registry at http://opportunities.usda.gov/ for opportunities.

- **Shadowing assignments** - These are designed to give you exposure to managerial duties, responsibilities, and to show you different approaches to handling them. It also provides exposure and experience in a different unit than your own. A shadow assignment is an important next step after completing the Online Aspiring Leader Program. Ask your supervisor for recommendations for you to engage in a shadow assignment.

- **Developmental stretch assignments** - Stretch assignments allow you to ease into leadership roles by exposing you to an array of roles and responsibilities. Stretch assignments are about getting you to expand your competencies and skills to newer, wider levels. By definition, "a stretch assignment is one that requires you to take a leap beyond your comfort zone and, in the process, pick up new skills".

- **Be a Coach - Find a Coach** - Coaching is a thought provoking and creative process that inspires people to maximize their personal and professional potential. This is a method of instruction where the desired outcome is to obtain a certain level of knowledge or skills. See Marisol Rodriguez of the Virtual University for more information about coaching (email marisol.rodriguez@dm.usda.gov).

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (LECP) ONLINE AGLEARN TRAINING

- If you are at a GS-13 through GS-15 level, consider competing to participate in the Federal-wide Interagency Rotational Program. This program is managed across Federal agencies by the Office of Management and Budget. Participants in this program spend 6 months at a developmental assignment outside of USDA. You must have supervisory approval to participate. For more information about this program, contact MaryJo Thompson of the Virtual University (email maryjo.thompson@dm.usda.gov).

- Complete other online leadership development courses.

- Join professional organizations and volunteer to lead a group or serve as an officer.

- Participate in supervisor training.

- Serve as a representative on a special emphasis committee.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Activity	Description	Estimated time	Date completed
Component 1 & 2 Assign Program	Assign Program in AgLearn as instructed in LECP description document. Add goals and this activity to your IDP. Join the USDA Connect LECP Community.	-	
Component 3	Consider visiting the USDA Mentoring Portal, requesting access, and completing a mentoring application. If you decide to do so and upon being matched, use the mentoring relationship to achieve developmental goals. (This is **not** a mandatory component.)	Minimum of five (5) one hour meetings suggested	
Component 4 On-line Courses	Suggested sequence: a. Communicating Across Cultures (1 hour) b. Improving Communication in Cross-cultural Relationships (1 hour) c. Managing Diversity (0.2 hours) d. Understanding Workplace Diversity (0.1 hours) e. Leading Team: Developing the Team and its Culture (1 hour) f. Leading Teams: Managing Virtual Teams (1 hour) g. Developing Self Sufficient Teams (0.5 hours) h. Leadership Essentials: Communicating Vision (1 hour) i. Leadership Essentials: Leading with Emotional Intelligence (1 hour)	Maximum of 8 hours	
Component 4 Key chapters in recommended reading	Read in Books 24x7 AgLearn Chapters 1-6 of *The Inspiring Leader: Unlocking the Secrets of How Extraordinary Leaders Motivate*	3-4 hours	
Component 4 (continued) On-line Courses	Suggested Sequence: a. Developing Employees (HRCI/PHR) (1.5 hours) b. Developing Employees through Delegation (0.2 hours) c. Developing People (0.2 hours) d. Establishing the Conditions for a Learning Culture (1 hour) e. Evaluating and Sustaining Organizational Learning (1 hour)	Maximum of 12 hours	

	f. Human Resources Flexibilities (1.5 hours) g. Leadership Essentials: Leading Business Execution (1 hour) h. Federal Budgeting Process (1 hour) i. Federal HR Flexibilities (1 hour) j. Leadership Essentials: Building Your Influence as a Leader (1 hour) k. Management Essentials: Developing Your Direct Reports (1 hour) l. Building and Managing Upward Relationships (0.2 hours) m. Getting Results without Direct Authority: Influencing Your Boss (1 hour) n. Getting Results without Direct Authority: Persuasive Communication (1 hour)		
Component 4 (continued) Key chapters in recommended reading	Read in Books 24x7 AgLearn Part I and II of ***Lead by Example: 50 Ways Great Leaders Inspire Results***	1-2 hours	
Component 5 SES Continual Learning Event	Attend one (1) Leadership Learning Event and register in AgLearn. These events and registration links will be shared with all participants in the program.	1-2 hours	
Component 6	Contact Roderick Mance (roderick.mance@dm.usda.gov) for the LECP Evaluation.	.5 hour	
Component 7	Print Certificate	-	

Remember to discuss your training with your supervisor, and to request approval for the time you spend in training, as well as to include the training on your Individual Development Plan (IDP).